

County of Los Angeles Quality and Productivity Commission
PRODUCTIVITY INVESTMENT FUND PROPOSAL
(Please submit the proposal with a cover letter signed by the department head)

Last Updated: May 1, 2019

Department: **Public Health**

Date:
June 22, 2020

Project Name:

Reducing Food Waste and Advancing Food Recovery: Partnership with Mobile Application to Support Food Distribution in Los Angeles County

PURPOSE OF FUNDING (50 words). Describe how the PIF funding will be used.

This proposal requests \$300,000 to partner with a food recovery mobile application (app) that connects businesses with surplus food to community-based organizations that distribute nutritious food to vulnerable populations (e.g. the homeless, low-income groups). This effort will help close the gap between abundance and need in Los Angeles County.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT, INCLUDING BENEFITS (300 words). Describe benefits and potential multi-departmental or countywide adaptation.

Mobile apps can improve efficiency in food recovery and distribution by facilitating donations of surplus food between businesses and existing networks of community-based organizations and charitable feeding operations. A multitude of food recovery apps exist throughout the United States that approach the food waste problem differently, including recovering food from catering large scale events to recovering food from the supply chain. Recently, the Department of Public Health conducted in-depth interviews with representatives from eight mobile app companies (see Appendix A). According to interview results, three common barriers were identified by the eight representatives: (1) liability and food safety concerns among the intended users of the app, (2) adoption of this new technology and its integration into the regular workflow of partnering businesses (organizations), and (3) the subscription cost (fees), which includes transportation of the food and the generation of individualized donation reports for documenting chain of custody.

In this project, we propose to utilize an existing mobile food recovery app to increase the efficiency of food distribution across LA County. The requested funding will be used to incentivize the use of the app by waiving its subscription fees. Public Health will also provide information and technical support to address businesses'/organizations' concerns about liability and food safety.

Because the project will include working with businesses/organizations within incorporated cities, it complements Public Works' Food Donation and Recovery Outreach Program (DROP) which operates in Unincorporated areas in LA County. This synergy should help city and county public works agencies meet the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle)'s edible food recovery reporting requirements.

EVALUATION/PERFORMANCE MEASURES. (300 words) Describe what specific outcomes are to be achieved and how the project will enhance quality and/or productivity.

Outcomes of this demonstration project will include:

- 1) Increased subscription and usage of the mobile app
 - a. 50 new businesses throughout LA County will subscribe to the mobile recovery app
 - b. Businesses and community-based non-profit organizations will collectively complete a minimum of 4,800 donations over the grant period
- 2) Secondary Outcome Measurements
 - a. Pounds of Food Diverted from the Landfill or Compost: 390,000
 - b. Meals Donated Directly to the Community: 325,000
 - i. Equivalent Value of Meals for the Nonprofit Recipients: \$3.9 million
 - c. Total Cost per Meal with Program ~ \$0.92
Calculated as Total Cost per Meal with Program (total cost of the program to LA County, \$300,000, divided by the total meals donated from this program, 325,000) ~ \$0.92
 - d. CO2 Emissions Prevented from Methane: 1,710,000 lbs
(Equivalent to 164 cars a year) per the US EPA's Greenhouse Gas Equivalency Calculator

In addition to the outcomes indicated above, a partnership with a food recovery mobile app strengthens Public Health's ability to enhance the quality of food recovery in the county, while supporting compliance to existing statewide policies. For example, the California Good Samaritan Food Donation Act states that "enforcement officers shall promote the recovery of food fit for human consumption during their normal, routine inspections." DPH Environmental Health intends to distribute informational brochures on food donations/food waste and liability protections for such donations and can promote the proposed food recovery mobile app, thus improving relationships with businesses while offering tangible, quantifiable solutions to handle their surplus food.

		<u>Amount Requested:</u>		
		<u>Loan</u>	<u>Grant</u> <u>\$300,000</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>\$300,000</u>
Cost Analysis Summary. Attach detail for A and B, including staff, equipment, supplies, etc.				
<u>Implementation Period</u>	<u>Project Year 1</u>	<u>Project Year 2</u>	<u>Project Year 3</u>	
A. Annual Cost of Current Process:	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
B. Estimated Annual Cost of Proposal:	\$200,000	\$100,000		\$0
C. Savings (B minus A)	N/A	N/A	N/A	0\$0.00
<u>Funds Flow Summary: Indicate the amount of funds needed during implementation by period (fiscal year and quarter)</u>				
Public Health will follow established solicitation protocols to identify and enter into contract with an existing food recovery mobile app. The expected date of contract execution is August 2020. \$50,000 is requested for each quarter in Year 1 to cover the cost of subscription fees as an incentive to participate for businesses. \$25,000 is requested for each quarter in Year 2 to fund the remainder of the cost of the waived subscription fees.				
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QUESTIONS

1. **Has this proposal been submitted before for a Productivity Investment Fund loan or grant?** Yes _____ No X

If so, when (date)?

2. **Was this proposal included in the department's current budget request?**

Yes _____ No X If no, why not?

Funds for this project were not included in the departmental budget. In addition, current federal and state grants in the Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention (CDIP) are fairly prescriptive and do not allow for redirection of grant funding to support pilot (demonstration) projects. Similarly, the Division of Environmental Health is self-sustaining, deriving a majority of its funding from fees collected for its planned checks and inspection services. As with CDIP's grant funding, these fee-based revenues cannot be used for pilot project purposes.

3. **How many years will it take for the loan to be paid back (3 years maximum without special approval)? Where will the funds come from to repay the loan?**

N/A. Public Health is requesting for grant funding.

Hard Dollar Savings

Cost Avoidance

Revenue Generation

Other (please explain)

4. **Discuss potential for revenue increase, service enhancement, future cost avoidance and/or cost savings. Does it reduce net County cost?**

A partnership with a food recovery mobile app will enhance service delivery by connecting businesses with surplus food to community-based organizations in real time. Community-based organizations that provide services to their clients identify that providing food is an effective way to attract clients and connect them to the social services they need. The availability of donated food may help alleviate the financial

burden associated with purchasing food for these organizations, which instead can be allocated to provide social services with the costs saved.

5. How does this proposal extend, amplify, or complement existing cross-County best and shared practices (including, if applicable, technology or sustainability practices); describe the proposed solution in terms of its innovative use of technologies to achieve desired business outcomes, and/or Department strategic goals and objectives?

A partnership with a food recovery mobile app will help improve communication and assist in gathering food donation data. This is an opportunity for the County to help demonstrate progress toward Public Health's and Public Work's departmental goals, as well as addressing the current food access challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board of Supervisors Motion, "Reducing Both Food Waste and Food Insecurity in Los Angeles County" (adopted 2/19/19), directed Public Health to collaborate with the Department of Public Works and the Los Angeles County Office of Education to develop a plan to prevent food waste, redistribute surplus food and address food insecurity. The motion also included identifying opportunities to utilize technology to support food recovery. Additionally, Public Health's current Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), and Public Works' current Roadmap to a Sustainable Waste Management Future (Roadmap) emphasize the need to increase surplus food recovery to help alleviate food insecurity (Goal 1.1 "Prevent and manage chronic disease") and encourage the recovery of surplus edible food for people (Initiatives C and D). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic is putting an additional strain on community-based organizations due to increased demand and a reduction in staffing.

6. (150 words) Is the proposal a pilot project? If so, what are the conditions for further expansion or development?

This pilot project will enable Public Health to test the effectiveness of utilizing technology in the form of a partnership with a food recovery mobile app throughout Los

Angeles County. This funding is a relatively small investment to address barriers that mobile apps face in improving efficiency in food waste reduction and food recovery. If the strategies outlined result in an increased number of app subscriptions by businesses and community-based organizations and there is an increase in the number of surplus food donations, Public Health will explore scaling efforts. This pilot will help determine potential changes in approach, scope and direction.

7. (300 words) Toward which current County objectives will this project maximize and leverage resources and/or drive innovation and operational effectiveness. What current County processes or functions will be eliminated or streamlined via productivity enhancements and/or quality improvements?

The partnership with a mobile app will address the following County objectives:

- Promote Active and Healthy Lifestyles: Conduct outreach to high needs, traditionally underserved populations within the County by supporting safe and comfortable built environments that encourage physical activity and access to healthy food
- Addresses the Serious Threat of Global Climate Change – Create and implement policies and programs to; reduce the emission of greenhouse gases from all sectors of our community; ensure that community climate resilience is integrated into our programs and plans; and inspire others to take action
- Reduce Waste Generation and Recycle and Reuse Waste Resources – Increase landfill diversion and recycling programs and infrastructure and inspire the community to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste materials

Connecting surplus, wholesome food to those in need will increase the amount of food for low-income communities and repurpose food so that they do not end up in landfills. However, this work is labor-intensive and inefficient due to a lack of real-time information on food availability. As the amount of surplus food continues to grow in the region, the app has the potential to give community-based organizations real time information in the field, as time is an essential factor in handling surplus food from being spoiled. The app will reinforce the County as a leader in the community by facilitating

the collection and distribution of unspoiled, healthy food to those in need. Through surplus food management, the County can help businesses and nonprofit organizations become a part of a food sharing network, and provide a system that can quantify rescued food for State organic waste diversion reporting purposes. The app will supplement DPW's Food Donation and Recovery Outreach Program (Food DROP) by operating in incorporated areas, a County program that currently connects businesses in the County Unincorporated Communities (CUC) only at this time.

8. (300 words) Does this proposal relate to a specific Countywide Strategic Plan goal? If yes, please explain.

Food insecurity poses both short and long-term health risks for children and adults. In 2015, low food insecurity, which is characterized by reduced quality and desirability of diet, affected 29.2% of Los Angeles County households with incomes less than 300% FPL. Very low food security, which is defined by reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake, impacted 11.3% of households. The highest prevalence of very low food security is found in both Metro (16.3%) and Antelope Valley (16.3%) areas of Los Angeles County. As many in Los Angeles County struggle with homelessness and have insufficient food to eat, approximately 1.7 million tons of food are sent annually to landfills in the region, accounting for nearly one-third of the state's total food waste stream each year. This does not take into account the current effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has resulted in increased job losses.

Utilization of a food recovery mobile app supports three specific Countywide Strategic Plan goals, including: (1) Address the Serious Threat of Global Climate Change – create and implement policies and programs to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases from all sectors of our community; (2) Reduce Waste Generation and Recycle and Reuse Waste Resources – increase landfill diversion and recycling programs and infrastructure and inspire the community to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste materials; and (3) Promote Active and Healthy Lifestyles – conduct outreach to high needs, traditionally underserved populations within the county by supporting safe and

comfortable built environments that encourage physical activity and access to healthy food.

Los Angeles County recognizes the threats that global climate change poses on our region. The first two identified goals are related to climate change and food waste diversion. Utilization of an app helps build an infrastructure to recover surplus food and supports these County goals. The third goal of creating safe spaces where residents can directly access healthy food can be met by having reliable, healthy food distribution in underserved communities.

9. (150 words) Does this proposal enhance the County image and/or improve relationships with the County's constituents? Please explain.

Partnership with a food recovery mobile app can address two vital and challenging issues that the County faces: an exorbitant amount of food waste and a high prevalence of homelessness and food insecurity in low-income communities. It is the Board of Supervisor's priority to help vulnerable communities improve on these two social and health related conditions by helping to build an infrastructure around food access via food recovery.

County residents that rely on supplemental sources of nutrition such as those offered by the United States Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – formerly known as food stamps, or charitable food services can benefit from the increased supply of surplus wholesome food. The business sector can also benefit from this technology as well. Community-based organizations can benefit by obtaining foods they need, saving them money that would otherwise have been used to purchase food instead.

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10. (150 words) How might this proposal promote interdepartmental cooperation including, if applicable, data sharing and program design?

The success of the partnership with a food recovery mobile app is contingent on inter- and intra-departmental coordination with Public Works, Social Services, Workforce Development and Community Services, Emergency Operations Center's Food Security Branch, and the Housing for Health program under the LA County Health Alliance. Coordination will be required to identify both donors and recipients to participate in this effort, as well as sharing food donation data analytics from the mobile app, which will encourage further collaboration with Department of Public Works by streamlining the various County food recovery efforts and capturing donation data that would have otherwise not been tracked.

11. (150 words) Where did the original idea for this project come from?

The original idea and support for a Los Angeles County food recovery mobile app came from the former Director of the Health Agency, Dr. Mitchell Katz, with strong support from Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Director of Public Health.

12. When will the funds be needed? Please indicate the amount needed by fiscal year and quarter:

2019-2020

1st Quarter \$ _____

2nd Quarter \$ _____

3rd Quarter \$ _____

4th Quarter \$ _____

2020-2021

1st Quarter \$ 50,000

2nd Quarter \$ 50,000

3rd Quarter \$ 50,000

4th Quarter \$ 50,000

2021-2022

1st Quarter \$ 25,000

2nd Quarter \$ 25,000

3rd Quarter \$ 25,000

2022-2023

1st Quarter \$ _____

2nd Quarter \$ _____

3rd Quarter \$ _____

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4th Quarter \$ 25,000

4th Quarter \$ _____

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

<u>KEY MILESTONES</u>	<u>START DATE</u>	<u>FUNDS NEEDED</u>	<u>FUNDS REPAID</u>
(Major steps in the project development)	(Estimated date for each project step)	(Amount and quarter funds will be needed)	(Amount and quarter funds will be repaid)
Initiate procurement process enter into contract with a mobile app provider	June 2020	None	N/A
Contract executed with mobile food recovery app provider	August 2020	N/A	N/A
DPH and mobile app finalizing outreach plan	July – September 2020	\$50,000, 1 st quarter	N/A
DPH and mobile app launch recruitment campaign to engage businesses and CBOs to utilize their technology. Begin subscriptions.	October 2020	\$50,000, 2 nd quarter	N/A
Continue recruitment of businesses and CBOs	January – June 2021 July 2021-June 2022	\$50,000 3 rd and 4 th quarter, respectively \$25,000 1 st - 4 th quarter	N/A

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LINE ITEM BUDGET DETAIL

(Work with your Budget Analyst)

Services and Supplies

List all services and supplies here

(a) Expenses related to contracted mobile app	\$300,000
\$500 per month x 12 months x 50 businesses	

Other Charges

List all other charges here

(b) Total other charges	\$ 0
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Fixed Assets

List all equipment and other fixed assets here

(c) Total fixed assets	\$ 0
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TOTAL COSTS (a+b+c)	\$ 300,000
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